this service are discussed by the the designated authorities of the two countries and by the two Governments through diplomatic channels.

Indo-Iran relations

2618. SHRI DEVDAS APTE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indo-Iran relations are getting worse day by day;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that US Government are putting pressure to stop Indo-Iran pipeline project;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) to what extent Government think that US pressure interferes India's Foreign Policy and its interests?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) No.

(e) India's relations with any country are independent of its relations with a third country. Government's foreign policy is guided by India's national interests.

Anti-Terror Mechanism with Pakistan

2619. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Anti-Terror Mechanism with Pakistan has been finalized;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have taken note of the reservations expressed in media by the experts on security and strategy issues;

(d) the details of Government's response on such apprehensions; and

(e) whether the mandate of such mechanism and whether resources and processes to achieve the mandate have been decided?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) During the Prime Minister's meeting with President Musharraf of Pakistan in Havana on 16 September 2006, it was decided to put in place an India-Pakistan anti-terrorism institutional mechanism to identify and implement counter-terrorism initiatives and investigations. During the Foreign Secretary talks in November 2006, both sides agreed to set up a 3-member Anti-Terrorism Mechanism.

(e) The first meeting of the Joint-Anti-Terrorism Mechanism took place on 6-7 March 2007 in Islamabad. At this meeting both sides agreed that specific information would be exchanged through the mechanism for helping investigations on either side related to terrorist acts and prevention of violence and terrorist acts in the two countries. It was also agreed that while the Anti-Terrorism Mechanism would meet on a quarterly basis, any information which is required to be conveyed on priority basis would be immediately conveyed through the respective heads of the mechanism.

Visa by Ambassadors/High Commissioners

2620. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have empowered our Ambassadors and High Commissioners to grant one-time five year visas to foreign scholars;

(b) the details of this policy;

(c) whether this rules applies to all foreign countries without exception;

(d) whether Government have asked for "Reciprocal Visa facilities" for Indian Scholars; and

(e) if not, reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes.

(b) An applicant for student visa must produce proof of admission to a full time course in a recognised/reputed educational institution in India and of satisfactory evidence of financial support in the form of a letter of support from parent/guardian accompanied by a bank guarantee. The applicant must also produce, to the satisfaction of the Mission, evidence of transfer of adequate funds for at least four months sustenance in India